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Identical letters dated 23 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government and pursuant to the recent missile test launches by the Iranian military forces and a campaign of disinformation, as well as the efforts to misinterpret Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) that followed, I would like to provide the following clarifications:

1. Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) does not prohibit legitimate and conventional military activities, nor does international law disallow them. Iran's activities are not inconsistent with said resolution, as Iran has not undertaken "any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons". Iran has never sought to acquire nuclear weapons and never will in the future, as it fully honours its commitment under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) is quite clear and devoid of any ambiguity when it comes to ballistic missiles. Moreover, the language in paragraph 3 of annex B of resolution 2231 (2015) is clearly not mandatory. Thus, we reject any arbitrary interpretation of the provisions of the resolution and its annexes, and call upon all parties to act in good faith and refrain from provocations. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes there is no basis for the raising of this issue under the resolution 2231 (2015) framework in the Security Council.

2. Iran, as a country living in the most unstable and volatile region of the world, is fully entitled to build a credible conventional capability to deter and defend against any aggression. Iran's recent ballistic missile test launches were part of the ongoing efforts of its armed forces to strengthen its legitimate defence capabilities and to demonstrate the effectiveness and readiness of missile systems against security threats and to exercise the right to self-defence in the event of any armed attack. What Iran has always said and done points clearly to the full defensive nature of its military efforts against threats and intimidations. The statements made by the Iranian military commanders were clearly reflective of such policy. The commander of the Aerospace Force of the Guards Corps, whose statement has been wildly distorted by parties with a vested interest, reiterated in his interview following the tests that "we won't start any war; we aim, however, to defend ourselves ... we don't intend to attack any country, but if we come under attack, we should be able to retaliate".

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3. It is demagoguery for those who are on the supplying and receiving ends of around $100 billion worth of state-of-the-art weaponry in the lower Persian Gulf subregion alone in 2015 (while Iran's entire defence budget in the same year was a small fraction of that amount) to hype Iran's conventional missile test launches to such a grotesque level. The disparity between Iran's defence spending and that of other States of the region is colossal and this has been acknowledged, even by United States officials at the highest levels. Under such circumstances, it is outrageous that those who see no limit in the military build-up in the region seek to thwart our legitimate efforts to tap into our own human and material resources to build an imperative conventional military defence and deterrence capability.

4. For decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been under threat of use of force by the United States and the Israeli regime in flagrant violation of Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations. The United States and the Israeli regime have continued to brandish their sword of aggression against and continued their saber-rattling discourse with Iran, including through the infamous term "all options are on the table". And our entire region is paying now a staggering price for the destabilizing impact of the direct and all-out aggressions against our neighbours. Last year, the Israeli regime even took military threat against Iran to its extreme. Moshe Yaalon, Defence Minister of this regime, in a speech on 5 May 2015 in the Shurat Hadin Law of War Conference in Jerusalem threatened to use a nuclear bomb against Iran (see document S/2015/353 dated 19 May 2015 containing my letter addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council). The same regime remains the only one in our region in unlawful possession of nuclear weapons and the only obstacle in the way towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We expect the Council to live up to its Charter responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and address the threats to use force against a United Nations Member State, similar to those I referred to above; threats that clearly go counter to the basic rules and principles of the Charter and international law.

5. The Islamic Republic of Iran thus reiterates that there is no basis for raising this issue in the Security Council and considers that it is contrary to the prevailing positive environment and detrimental to the good-faith implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative